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## ARTISTS IN HAIR AT HANOVER SQUARE.

It is good to know the A B C and X Y Z of hair-dressing, as well as of other fine arts, I thought, when I heard of the novel *coiffure soirées* given this season; and the first one I had timely notice of, I went to see. My eagerness for instruction was a little too eager, as it happened, for all things were not ready for visitors' reception when I presented myself to make payment at the door. Umbrella-man, lounging friends, intended performers, were in a group at the entrance, arranging where they should take their stand, detailing previous experiences, anticipating probable success, exchanging how'd'ye does; and an answer was given, anything but official, to my inquiry as to which room the *soirée* was to be held in, and where I was to pay. Money would be received at the door, I was told—after some evasive looking from eye to eye, and much shy endeavour to shift responding on to some one else—and the receiver would be the young man who took the tickets; but—he hadn't come yet, and perhaps I would be so good as to sit down till he did! So I, and some other of the punctual and marvelling audience, sat; and after some ten minutes' sitting, we were told the missing man had come, we hurried to him with our shillings, we paid him, were politely bowed to, and found ourselves the right side of the Rubicon separating Ignorance from Knowledge.

It was the vestibule of the concert-rooms that had been set apart for the curious entertainment; that portion that is looked at languidly on ordinary *matinées* and evenings, and swept through uninterestedly by airy gossamers and heavy silks. Probably the hiring of this was cheaper for so experimental a diversion; or it was thought large enough, may be, for the company it would be wise to expect. This, as it proved, was a mistake; at anyrate, if the comfort and seeing possibilities of an audience are to be taken into account; for there were some hundreds of people present, the weather was extremely hot, and the crowding, when the captivating part of the performance

arrived, was obstructive and excessive. However, it was not till late in the *séance* that this was felt. On first entering the *salle*, there was space enough to look at everything. An oval centre was roped off from the flat floor for the convenience of the dressers and dressees; and down this was placed a row of dressing-tables, topped with a line of mahogany swing-looking-glasses, standing back to back. Facing each glass—there were ten in all—was a cane-seated chair, with the familiar *peignoir* hung across it, and every necessary for the toilet ranged conveniently in front. It is malignant, perhaps, to give a detailed list of what these necessities were, as a talkative and irreverent young person cried out early in the evening: 'Won't the gentlemen know what ladies are made up with now!'—but there lay the powder-box, and the long inviting curl, and the little fringe of forehead-hair distinguishing the *ingénue*, and the pot of rouge, and the vindictive scissors; and there were hair-pins, and wool-puffs, and braid-strings, and gold-tipped combs, and flaming ribbons, and more flower-wreaths and other pretty ornaments than it was possible to tell the use of till the work was done. Coming in nervously to arrange all these were the 'expositors,' as the spokesman of the evening called them, bringing with them black leathern bags, containing the implements requisite for their skill—the many-shaped combs, and brushes, and twisting-irons, which they put ready to their hand, and from which they modestly and ceremoniously retired.

These messieurs, the expositors, were an attractive part of the exhibition themselves. The beard of one was a delight—to himself, as well as to us who saw. The air of another was equally the object of envy and admiration. 'What a very genteel-looking figure that young man is!' cried one of the audience rapturously, pointing to the young man; and the gentleman she addressed her rapture to was obliged, in justice, to move his head affirmatively, although it was evident he would have liked to have thrust the admired one through. But it was only for a few minutes, and in preparation, that these expositors were as

yet seen. The time for the *coup d'œil* was wearisomely delayed. The audience grew thicker and thicker; the buzz of instruction and speculation became more distinct; ladies in rustling dresses and long cloaks and veils, were mysteriously hurried through (we all knew they were the ladies, and honoured them with a close stare); fresh expositors ventured into the oval, and produced the contents of their leathern bags; yet no sign of anything more was forthcoming, and impatience would soon have broken into a roar. In time, however, an apology for the tardiness was offered—one of the 'parties' had not yet arrived; some musicians at a piano and violin burst into a lively quadrille; and we all felt the pleasure of the evening was about to begin. There was a stir; the quadrille tune stopped, was changed into an imposing march; a little crowd of committee-men and intimates at the far end of the oval made way; and, true to our prognostication, the ladies whose head-dressing was to be our amusement were gallantly and solemnly led in.

Their escorts were the gentlemen who were to exhibit on them. They were perfectly business-like and modest, going composedly where they were taken, without one sharp or bold glance round. It had been a wonder as to what manner of young women they could be, to suffer so public a decoration, and be the recipients of scrutiny from which there could be no flinching and no redress. No conclusion could be arrived at when they were actually within view—none, but that no exception could be taken to any one of them, and that no idea was present with them but calm co-operation in the evening's work. They were of all (moderate) ages, and of all statures; from a tall, queenly girl, with her long flaxen hair spread profusely over her shoulders, to a little saucy maiden, certainly not older than fourteen, and to an acid-looking lady, with no single smile or blush to relieve her features, possibly because she was an unfashionable brunette. They were all, or nearly all, in evening-dress; the fair girl, who headed the procession, in white silk, the others in pink, or blue, or lilac, or more sober black; and they all had their hair unfastened from its regular coiffing, and hanging loose for the application of the expositor's hand. The order in which they were to take their seats had been previously determined; there was no confusion, therefore, now they had appeared, but each was conducted to her table without any but the inevitable stir. There was a great clapping, and all of the audience in the back-seats rose to their feet; but this last was because the room was not well adapted to seeing, and because the ladies, when they were taken to their chairs, immediately sat down; recourse was obliged, consequently, to be had to standing, or there would have been no view of anything at all. And from the first moment of the sitting, work was going forward, so there was not a moment to be lost. The ladies' hair having been previously brushed out, and celerity being a chief desideratum in the undertaking, business was proceeded with vivaciously, amid profound silence. Even the musicians, *blasés* as they are with witnessing every entertainment under the—gas, turned from the pages of the march the moment it was concluded, and looked on with greedy eyes. Then the ladies drew their *peignoirs* tightly round them; they held down their momentous heads; and the

expositors parted and frizzed, and combed and brushed, with all the gravity that became them, and with astonishing skill. As each head emerged from its cloudiness, and shewed a deft outline, the interest of the exhibition warmed. The ladies gained courage, and ventured to look gently up; they saw their faces in the glass before them, and the reflection of the peering crowd behind; and those with a sense of humour gave a little flitting smile, and those who had only soul enough to feel abashed, looked down again with more extinguishment than before. The expositors, giving a glance at their rivals by their side, and seeing the progress they were making, made their own progress yet quicker, resolved they would not be left behind. The spectators, finding the models and masters developing into life, drank in more eagerly what was going on, and passed from silence into a murmur of applause—a murmur only, just an enjoying hum, a contented coo from one to another of what a lovely loop one artist was creating, and of how superiorly graceful was the frizzing of some one else. All the spectators were well qualified to judge; they were of the profession evidently, almost to a woman and a man. Ladies alone, and without any timorousness for want of escort, had walked in composedly and calm, choosing the best seats the fulness of the company had left them, with all the solemnity of earnestness of purpose and zeal; and what could they be but ladies' ladies, come in perfect good faith to make their usefulness and value more? The heads they had to deck and trim might have much extra allurements and attraction given them if they could frizz and twist, and braid and powder with some addition to their skill; so there they were, attending a sort of manipulative lecture, that they might see how to do it the best way it was to be done. And gentlemen alone, or in parties of two or three, had entered with the expression of similar business-aim upon their brow—with a sweet absence of that overcoming air of insolent habituation that disfigures our (young) male sight-seers in whatever place they are—and what could they be but *coiffeurs*, men or masters, honestly and honourably acquainting themselves with the developments of their art?

Few else, indeed, but these would have taken such absorbing interest in the show. There would have been, with others, some anticipation of a 'lark,' some inquisitiveness as to the look of the 'girls;' but when they found these last so shrouded in their hair and gowns, and saw that business was the keynote of the whole sitting, without the admixture of a bit of fun, they would have distinguished themselves by extraneous comments, or have slid off to some livelier entertainment, exasperatingly bored. No tediousness or disappointment, however, was felt by anybody there. There was much perplexity; much provoking indecision as to which pretty head to keep the eyes intently on, when there were so many with equal claims, equally in view. But this was a fair instance of *embarras de richesses*, and certainly no ground of legitimate complaint. With fingers so briskly brushing the locks of the lady on our left, why should we lament because other fingers were as agile in the decoration of the lady on our right, or of the lady agreeably and advantageously just before? There was a smiling face, here, emerging gradually from a veil of golden hair; and because I wanted to watch its nice progression, ought I to

be angry at a pair of peeping eyes having rival enticement for me, at the precisely opposite side? The only thing was, optically, to skip, and hop, and jump; to be a moment here, a moment there; to fly and flutter, and hover low; to watch one adorning in the real flesh, to catch a glimpse of another by reflection in her glass, to guess how hidden ones were beautifying by the admiration that was eloquent in all the lookers' eyes. That which I could not see myself, I could see—sufficiently for my purpose, at any rate—by others; and so I glanced and gloated, whilst the combs and brushes still went frizzing, and the hair was shaped into a graceful bow or curl.

And soon there was less need for such a comprehensive view. After about twenty minutes' labour, a clapping in the region of one chair announced that its occupant was free, and her expositor the most expeditious of them all. So there was one pair less of busy hands to keep the mind distracted. In a brace of minutes more a second clapping came, and the looking was diminished again; and further clapping occurred at intervals, till the heads were limited to three or four. These were they that were the most elaborate, and were to shine out grandly *à la Louis Quatorze*; and when only they were left, it was more easy to see what was going on. It was very comical, too. The cloud of crowning powder fell down so thickly on the devoted heads, the ladies had to crouch and shut their eyes, and even then to put forth the protecting shield of a white-gloved hand. Freer remarks were current then, also, as to the desirability of the style. 'What a Guy she looks!' one frank lady cried. 'My! that is a way!' exclaimed another. 'I shouldn't like my head made like that!' was the comment of a third. And all the while the powdering was making the ladies shrink; streaming ribbons were being twisted in and out their curls; glittering ornaments were being adjusted; and the twenty minutes were swelling busily into a full half hour.

At last all the work was done. The final clapping came; the tenth lady was completed; the *peignoirs*, with their accompanying puff, taken off and folded up; and the ladies raised their heads and shook themselves, let fall their shawls or cloaks, and then sat silently and calmly, the very image of the wax-beauties in the shops.

'The expositors will now walk round the room with the ladies they have dressed,' was then called out, 'that every one may see.'

And with the further order of 'Gentlemen next the looking-glasses, ladies outside!' the queer procession began. Daintily and slowly the couples walked round and round, each lady on the arm of her expositor, the music playing. There was time to look calmly at each head; and if there had been no distracting ten—if there had only been a couple, say—a good lesson in *coiffures* might have been learned. No plain hair-dressing was there; none of the simple knots and *bandeaux*, that after all let hair seem beautiful, with its own natural wave and gloss. Every lock and tress was so distended and frizzed out, it had no smoothness at all; and it was so artificially placed and pendent, it was impossible to tell whether it had grown on the wearer's head, or whether it had been merely stuck there after it had been bought. But simplicity was not, of course, what had been required; that every lady could accomplish for herself. It is by

art an artist lives, and he is not likely to shew it is best to be without any art at all; and so the hair-dressers stepped proudly, as they led their ladies round; and the wider and more involved and complex their productions were, the greater was the wonder caused by them, and the more they were admired.

There was but one arrangement after this. The ladies were returned gallantly to their seats; the expositors, with a bow, left them; and then it was announced that the last ceremony would be inverted, for that the ladies would be so obliging as to remain in their chairs, whilst the inquisitive company walked in procession round. And this was faithfully done—faithfully, that is to say, on the part of the fair sitters; but with the audience part of us, having that inadequate roped oval to convey ourselves into, we were so pressed and squeezed, we were fast stuck, and could not move an inch. However, order was brought about at last by the original suggestion, that we should all try to revolve one way; and then those who were nearest the ladies were so in love with the sight that was thus afforded them, they created another difficulty by refusing to move on at all! But all was made smooth in time. Every profusely decorated head was seen—the fair girl's, turned now into an antiquated beauty's, with a youthful cheek belying her silvered hair, and a blush making her more youthful when she saw how her *ensemble* was admired; the *ingénue's*, blonde of course, with her bloneness made more becoming by ribbon-loops of bright sky-blue; the acid lady's, acid still in her decoration, which was only a cluster of dark-hued flowers, that gave no contrast to her thin-brushed raven hair; another brunette's sprinkled with a glittering powder that shone and sparkled as if she had stood under a shower of tiny brilliants, or as if each gleam were a distant star, and the head that held them a small night-sky. A crystal butterfly shimmering among the powdered frizzes of one Louis Quatorze, was a great attraction; some very gracefully-hung back curls, one of which fell prettily over a still prettier shoulder, received many words of praise; and altogether, a strong buzz of approval or objection was the accompaniment to our lingering footsteps. The women furnished the most part of this music, of course. Their lively tongues were as active as their eyes and (some) of their fingers, in letting all around them know what hit their taste, and what they vehemently despised. The men, for the most part, looked on silently, doing extra work in looking for what they spared in talking; but whether mute or garrulous, all were so long in our inspection, appeal was made to us to have mercy on the ladies sitting so long in the publicity and the heat; the expositors seconded this by a generous burst of 'Hear, hear!' and we remembered our modesty and our pity, and melted gradually away.

A recollection of the discomfort suffered by our very great-grandmothers over their Louis Quatorze head-dressing, in our own little island, was inevitable while looking on this scene. Poor creatures! We all know how they were obliged to be be-frizzed and be-powdered early in the morning, if they were going to an 'assembly' at night, or else they could not have been 'done' at all. We know, also, how they have even been obliged to sleep in their sticky and heavy finery at times of great press. I wonder whether that was because each



hair-dresser was so much longer over each head then, or whether there were so many more ladies to be done, or so many *less* hair-dressers to do? Modern appliances may have decreased the time necessary for the operation a great deal—and there were no cushions to prop up the erections in Hanover Square; as one of the expositors said, in explanation to a *confrère*, there were 'no frisettes nor anything;' and this may lessen the severity of monstrous-head-dress-fever, if it should become epidemic in our time. But even this present period of half an hour a lady, gives only six ladies to each hair-dresser between the evening hours of, let us say, six to nine; so, after all, our immunity from the danger of a 'block' depends entirely on the number of men at our command.

### ABYSSINIA.

ABYSSINIA—a country which has been, for many weeks past, so prominent a subject of interest to us—is, it seems, almost a *terra incognita* to the world in general. The amount of ignorance which exists upon the subject is astonishing, considering our comparative proximity to the place itself, and the fact that, by its former name of Ethiopia, it was well known to the ancient Jews, Greeks, and Romans, with all of whom it carried on a frequent intercourse. How continually, also, do we find mention made of Ethiopia and the Ethiopians in the Bible, affording evidence of its having attained a certain degree of civilisation even in those remote times. Still more remarkable is this ignorance, since Abyssinia (the word is merely a corruption of the local name, 'Habash') is the only professedly Christian country upon the whole African continent. The gospel was introduced into it by Frumentius as early as the year 320 A.D. We cast aside, as unworthy of credit, the traditions that St Matthew and St Bartholomew preached there; or that an attempt was made by the eunuch of Queen Candace, whom Philip baptised, to introduce Christianity amongst his brethren; and still more, the wild superstition, yet prevalent, which would assert that the Virgin Mary, with the child Jesus himself, came into the country when they fled from Egypt. It is enough for us to know that, for fully fifteen hundred years, Abyssinia has professed the Christian religion, maintained a Christian church after the Greek model, and has doubtless acted up to the measure of her lights, naturally dim and imperfect, when we reflect on her comparative isolation from the rest of the Christian community. The Roman Catholics have, indeed, always kept up an occasional intercourse with this outlying flock from Christ's fold. St Athanasius sent nine missionaries into the country; and Jesuit priests have, again and again, found their way into it. The Moravians have also maintained a mission in Tigré for some generations; but their efforts appear merely to have given great offence to the native priesthood, without producing any beneficial effects. Such influences as these have not been sufficient to prevent the doctrines and practice of the Abyssinian Church from partaking very strongly of both a Jewish and a Mohammedan element—followers of both these creeds having been numerous in the country from time immemorial; while the latter is the national religion of many contiguous peoples.

This little-known country into which we are

about to send a formidable expedition consists generally of a central plateau or table-land, which is surrounded on two sides by lofty mountains, that rise from the littoral flat which abuts on them, and which sinks gradually on two other sides into a low level country, the home of the true negro. This plateau is again diversified by different ranges of mountains, that rise from out it, and is in parts densely wooded. Its climate is temperate, dry, and salubrious; but on descending into the low lands that lie contiguous to it, we find, on the contrary, a climate hot, relaxing, and unhealthy; while between these two extremes there are many huge tracts, possessing different degrees of salubrity. On the whole, we do not anticipate that our troops will suffer from the climate to the extent which is apparently expected by the daily press—or that a force acclimatised in India will experience much inconvenience from heat; provided always that it does not attempt operations before the month of November, when the prevalent malarious influences which always prevail during the autumn months will have subsided, and the fierceness of the solar rays will have considerably decreased.

In one respect only, however, does it appear that there is much to be *gained* from the expedition; we refer to the cause of science, for there can be no doubt that Abyssinia offers a novel field for research in many branches of inquiry. Its mineralogical wealth is only as yet a matter of speculation, its botany is all but unknown, and its zoology has been studied only in the most cursory manner. We know, with regard to this last, that it is probable that many species of mammalia exist which are new to science, and that most of the usual game peculiar to the African continent is to be met with. The lion and the leopard are not uncommon; and there are several varieties of wild-cats, including the civet cat, and a beautiful species known to the natives by the name of the Nebry Guolqual. There are certainly two species of hyænas, and two of the wild-dog; one of these latter is of a brindled colour, having legs covered with spots. These animals hunt in packs, and are said occasionally to attack even the elephant and the buffalo. The description of them seems to coincide with a variety which has been found in the Karakorum Mountains, in Central Asia, from which place we believe a skin was procured by Captain Peyton of the 18th Hussars. The other species found in Abyssinia seems identical, or nearly so, with the *Canis venaticus* of India. Jackals of three varieties are to be met with. The elephant and the buffalo are common in the low grounds upon the banks of the Mareb river, and in a few other places. The giraffe and rhinoceros are found in one portion of Tigré, and the hippopotamus abounds in the Tacaze river. The antelope tribe, though not nearly so abundant as in Southern Africa, is still more or less scattered throughout Abyssinia. That curious bird, the Abyssinian hornbill, is frequently met with; and the ostrich and bustard are found in the wilder parts of the country. To these may be added crocodiles, boas, monkeys, wild-boars, hares, rabbits, grouse, partridges, wild-fowl, and snipes.

The present race of Abyssinians certainly bear a striking resemblance to the type of people depicted in the Egyptian hieroglyphics, which is generally supposed to be intended to represent the old inhabitants of Ethiopia. If so, the race must be an ancient one, and must have preserved its purity

of blood for many thousand years, which would disprove the general tradition, that the present Abyssinians are of mixed blood. They certainly differ considerably in appearance; some of them being perfectly black, though the prevailing tint of skin is of a copper colour. They are generally of middle stature, seldom exceeding six feet. They are well shaped; and the women are decidedly good-looking, so much so, that they are in great request in the harems at Cairo and Constantinople, to which places many find their way, although females of the Galla tribe are often palmed off upon the Egyptians for Abyssinians. With respect to the capabilities of the Abyssinians for meeting Europeans in the field, nothing can be known by experience; but, of course, no barbarous or semi-barbarous nation, much less an Asiatic or an African one, can contend against a civilised people, aided by the appliances of war. Still, for bravery and endurance, the Abyssinians have always borne a high character upon the African continent, and it is probable that the material for soldiers in Abyssinia is excellent. The cavalry is very numerous, and much of it—especially that portion recruited from the Galla tribes—is good. It is chiefly armed with lances, of which each man carries two; but we fancy that the troopers of Jacob's horse, with their steady discipline, will make short work of it, unless greatly overmatched in point of numbers. The infantry is chiefly armed with matchlocks—large, heavy, and clumsy weapons, the loading of which is the labour of minutes, and which are continually missing fire. Besides these arms, they always carry a sword and shield: the former is often two-handed, and nearly four feet long; and the latter is generally made of buffalo-hide. It appears that Colonel Merewether, who is, it is said, to command the cavalry portion of our force, and who has already been collecting information for the use of government, recommends that the plain of Ailat be selected as the spot upon which to form a camp. He appears to be principally guided in this selection by the fact, that the immediate neighbourhood is well adapted for the action of cavalry. We cannot but think, however, that it will be a fatal mistake to allow any considerable portion of our troops to remain longer than is necessary on this side of the mountain-range. The climate of Ailat is hot and unwholesome, and the neighbouring country thickly wooded and abounding in malaria. Ailat itself is a miserable place, consisting of only a few scattered huts, and is chiefly remarkable for possessing some hot springs. Its inhabitants are Bedouins of the Bellaw clan, a pastoral tribe owning considerable herds of cattle.

The neighbourhood of the town of Kiaquor, which is about three marches farther on, and several thousand feet higher above the sea-level, offers, in our opinion, a far more favourable position for an intrenched camp, should one be considered necessary for the purpose of keeping open our communication with Massowah. Good water will be found here, and the climate is, comparatively speaking, cool and healthy, which is the chief desideratum to be looked for; and although the road from Ailat to Kiaquor is a somewhat hilly and difficult one, and deficient in water for a considerable way, once arrived in the vicinity of the latter place, a noble sandy plain will offer every facility for the encampment of a large force. The inhabitants of Kiaquor are Abyssinians proper;

but the Shohos, another pastoral tribe of Mohammedans (possessing no affinity in language or race to the Bellaws), wander over the country in its vicinity. Here commences the great province of Hamaseyn, one of the finest in Tigré, and the country in advance is populous, and studded with villages, from which a considerable quantity of supplies ought to be procurable. The soil of this part of Tigré is extremely rich, and were cultivation properly attended to, the finest crops would be the result. Such a state of anarchy has, however, prevailed in Abyssinia for ages, that vast tracts of land, which once supported a large population, are now permitted to remain untilled. The inhabitants of this province, too, possess no reputation as warriors, and consequently their land has been continually overrun and devastated by their fierce Amhara neighbours.

Adowa, the capital of Tigré, to which place a well-beaten road, or rather track, from Kiaquor exists, and which lies directly in the way to Magdala and Dehra Tabor, will probably be the next point to be gained by the expedition. Before reaching it, however, the river Mareb will have to be twice crossed, an operation itself of no great difficulty at a late season of the year, as the stream will have greatly diminished in its channel, and be easily fordable. On approaching Adowa, lofty and precipitous mountains will be observed; they are bare and rocky, and bear some resemblance, in the grotesqueness of their forms, to that curious range, the Dolomite mountains of Carinthia. Nestled in one of their valleys, and itself between four and five thousand feet above the level of the sea, lies the principal town of Tigré, which, although, in common with most other African cities, consisting but of an assemblage of huts and rude cottages, will be found, we believe, one of the most favourable places for a halt, as well as for recruiting the resources of our commissariat department. Grain is grown in the neighbourhood in considerable quantity. The soil in the valleys is very rich, and both wheat and barley can be readily obtained. The sanctuary of Medhainé Allen, which exists here, is one of the most revered in Abyssinia, and all persons are obliged to dismount and walk when arriving within a certain distance of it. We cannot but think that if we can manage to secure the alliance, or even the neutrality, of the Wagshum Góbayze of Tigré, a prince who is now in arms against King Theodore, our forces will not encounter any serious opposition up to this point. Here, however, our difficulties will begin; and the Amhara people, whose territories will bar our advance, and from whom King Theodore chiefly recruits his army, must be expected to put in an appearance. It is impossible to surmise what course may be taken by the Wollo Gallas, who are now in arms against Theodore, and by whom he has lately been driven to such extremities—nor can we anticipate the attitude of Menilek, the son-in-law of the Negus, and the various other chieftains who are now quarrelling amongst themselves within their unhappy country. Notwithstanding the professions of amity which it is understood Menilek has lately made to our resident at Aden, it would not surprise us to hear that a peace had been patched up between him and Theodore, and that they had sunk their long and violent enmity in the hope of opposing the common enemy.

The above remarks have been penned on the supposition that Massowah is really to be the point

of debarkation for the expedition under the command of Sir Robert Napier. It certainly holds out considerable advantages for the purpose in its admirable harbour, while no opposition is likely to be offered us by the inhabitants of the immediate mainland. The climate of Massowah is, however, a very hot and unhealthy one, and water is scarce and bad, being entirely brought from wells some miles distant. Still, the whole coast of the Red Sea possesses these unwholesome characteristics, and on the whole, we see no other place more suitable. We believe it to be a mistake to suppose that carriage to some considerable extent will not be procurable there; both donkeys and mules abound, and the nomadic tribes who inhabit the tract called Samhar, which intervenes between the coast and the mountains, could, we should imagine, be readily induced—for a consideration—to aid us in this respect. With regard to the release of our much-to-be-pitied countrymen, looking to the character of Theodore, his ignorance, bigotry, and obstinacy, and to the absurd reliance he is supposed to place upon the wretched pieces he calls his artillery, we wish we could think that the knowledge of our approach, or the dread of it, would be likely to induce him to surrender their persons. That such may be the case, however, and that we may be proved wholly mistaken in our surmises, is our most sincere desire.

## ONE OF THE FAMILY.

### CHAPTER XXIII.—UNDER THE MUD.

WHEN Valentine Blake, in accordance with his expressed intention, informed Claude, over their cigars in the studio, of the subject of that *tête-à-tête* in the drawing-room, and of how he had determined to apply for the post which Mrs Murphy had been so good as to put in his way, the painter's countenance assumed an unwonted seriousness. 'Wants you to be tutor to young Bentinck, does she? My dear Blake, I should have been less surprised if Selina had made love to you—less surprised, and I had almost said better pleased; for, depend upon it, she has got some crooked design in her mind. As for her solicitude to prevent this lad from growing up a scamp, that's rubbish. Why doesn't she take precautions in that way for her own Woody? I am sure he needs them. Pooh, pooh! Besides, between ourselves, Blake, my wife is not such an unruffled dove under disappointment as that comes to; she's a deal more like the fretful porcupine. Is it likely that she should feel this tender interest in one who has been the cause of her own child losing his inheritance?'

'The innocent cause,' observed Blake quietly.

'Yes, yer; that's all very well; but his innocence is not the feature of his character which presents itself most obtrusively to Selina. I tell you, she hates the whole pack of them down at Sandalithwaite; and since she had it in her mind to supply this young fellow with a tutor, I must say I am glad she has pitched upon you. I honestly confess, Blake, that if she had chosen a man of whom I entertained a less high opinion, I should have been uncomfortable: had she chosen a scoundrel—here Claude cast a cautious glance towards the door, and sank his voice to a whisper—'I would have written to Woodford myself to put him on his guard.'

'Against what, in Heaven's name?' inquired the other.

'By Jove! that's just what I don't know,' ejaculated Claude with vehemence. 'I should have told him to "look out," that's all. It's my opinion, where her "Woody" is concerned—of course, this is quite between ourselves—that Selina would stick at nothing. Her brother and she were never very cordial, and her marriage with your humble servant brought matters to a crisis. When her son and heir, as she called him, was born, she wrote the most aggravating letter to Woodford, who had been separated from his wife for years, and the consequence was—for I am sure he would never have done it except from pique—they came together again. Selina is secretly aware that it is her own act which has indirectly deprived her son of the reversion of a great estate. Do you think that makes her more resigned to its loss, Mr Blake? If you do, you are unacquainted with human nature. Now, I am not a learned man, nor a business man, nor a man whose opinion you would ask in a case of conscience, perhaps, but I know men and women well. The knowledge has been thrown away upon me, it is true, so far as practical results go. I'm an indolent fellow, and like my ease; but if I chose to lay myself out to please society (which my wife is always harping about), I could cut out all the solemn sulky swells in Christendom. I know the laws of gravity, sir, though I don't choose to obey them.—Where was I? Oh—What I was about to say was this, that although I let the world go by me as it will, I look uncommonly hard at the passengers. Nothing makes much impression on me, in a general way, but I shall never forget—never—my wife's face when she opened Ernest Woodford's letter, in yonder breakfast-room, seventeen years ago, announcing this young Bentinck's birth. I will not depress you by alluding to the tigress robbed of her young, and, besides, that venerable metaphor would utterly fail to convey an idea of her expression of countenance. But if ever a woman "looked snakes," and meant them, that was the case with Selina Murphy. I tell you, sir, if the bending her little finger had been necessary to preserve from destruction her brother and sister-in-law, not to mention their new-born offspring, she would have had splints fitted on, such as a Chinawoman applies to her nails, and kept it stiff all the days of her life. I didn't like it *then*,' concluded Mr Murphy with energy; 'and when I think of it in connection with her suggestion of this tutorship, I do not like it *now*.'

For a moment or two, Valentine Blake pulled hard at his cigar in silence, then quietly answered: 'It was very natural that Mrs Murphy should feel disappointed. I suppose she did not send her congratulations to Mr Woodford?'

'You are treating this matter much too lightly, Blake,' returned Claude with irritation. 'I have put myself out about it—a thing I have not done about any circumstance (except when she wanted to deprive me of my tobacco) for these eighteen years—so, pray, do not underrate the prodigy. It will not occur again, mind you; so make the most of it. Congratulate him! Sir, she never wrote a line to him or his wife; and she has never spoken one word upon the subject from that day to this—I don't say to me, for that's nothing, but even to her charming son. Do you suppose that this doesn't mean mischief? If you do, I have again to tell



you that you are unacquainted with human nature, and, in particular, that you know nothing about Selina Murphy.'

It was curious to contrast the energetic volubility of the ordinary easy-going and Epicurean painter, with the quiet and drily humorous tone of his companion's reply. It would really seem as though the two men had exchanged their respective temperaments.

'Do you suppose that your wife wants me to murder Master Bentinck?' asked Valentine Blake.

'Well, no: of course not. That's perfectly ridiculous, you know. She ain't a Lady Macbeth; though, if I could get her to sit for *that*, with Ernest Woodford's letter in her hand, I should catch just the right expression for the character.'

'I assure you, Mr Murphy,' observed the young man smiling, 'that there was nothing in your wife's looks while she was talking to me, that betrayed any sanguinary purpose. She looked somewhat embarrassed, indeed, from the first, but that may easily be accounted for (and, indeed, she herself hinted at the reason) by the awkwardness she felt at being about to offer me the money'—

'She offered you *money*?' gasped Claude, pale as a sheet. 'Selina Murphy offered you money?'

'Yes: by the by, I forgot to tell you that she wanted to press a bank-note upon me.—Why, what's the matter, my friend?'

'I don't know, Blake: Heaven only does know. Look here: I saw you for the first time six hours ago, and this woman has been my wife for twenty years. If I am doing wrong in talking to you thus openly, God forgive me. But I fear'—

'Stop!' interposed the other imperatively. 'Do not say anything for which you may be hereafter sorry. Whatever you have spoken to me—whatever suspicion you may have hinted—is a secret between us two. But there is no need for any such talk. Mrs Murphy requested me to keep her informed of what is going on at Dewbank Hall, and simply from a misconception of my character, imagined that a bribe would render me more zealous. That is the simple explanation of—of'—

'The phenomenon,' observed Claude, with a ghastly imitation of his old manner. 'She has never given me a five-pound note in her life—never. Well, I should have liked to have seen her making the offer to you. With what contending emotions must she have been torn! What a study for the cold chisel! What a personification would she have made of that tender subject, Parting!'

'I assure you, Mr Murphy, that you are now taking the proper view of the matter,' observed the other earnestly. 'I am certain that your wife meant her relatives no harm by sending me among them; nor, on the other hand, did she play the hypocrite, for the portrait which she drew of each can be scarcely flattering. You, of course, have seen the originals?'

'I know Woodford well,' returned the painter, 'but not his wife. I did not even know he had a wife, at the time when I was courting Selina up in Lakeland.—That is the district for young love, sir. Nature smiles upon it—except when it rains; poets have hallowed every square inch of it. There is one line of Wordsworth's where he speaks of the choice of a wife, in which I used to think at that time (and I'm sure of it now) that he hit off Mrs Murphy to a nicety:

A creature not too bright or good  
For human nature's daily food.

If she has a blemish, indeed, it lies quite in the other direction; and her brother was of the same opinion.'

'And you did not like Ernest Woodford?' observed Mr Blake, dexterously taking advantage of the recurrence of name to arrest Claude in his tirade.

'Like him?—no, man. There was nothing to like in him. He was a mere human money-bag, very strongly stitched. His first conversation with me, and his last, and I believe all the intervening ones, was about money. Money was tight, he used to say: everybody was selling out. "I am investing, sir; but then," added he in consequential tones, "I am the Individual, and not the General Public." Thank Heaven for that, thought I; but it would not have done to have said it, for Ernest Woodford is no fool. He makes the slight mistake, indeed, of imagining himself to be a sagacious man: and, above all things, he prides himself upon having no enthusiasms; so beware, my dear Blake, how you broach your peculiar patriotic theories. Nay, the fellow has not even a prejudice—except one, by the by, and that is against all Irishmen. Fortunately, you have not much of a brogue, but what you have I recommend you to stifle.'

'You don't paint my future employer in rose-colour, Mr Murphy. But your wife was mentioning some other folks I should meet with at Dewbank Hall. There was a Dr Warton, for instance—the man who puts in the advertisement.'

'Ah! you will find him a clever fellow, and an agreeable relief from the Black Squire, if drink has not by this time drowned his wits; but besides him, upon my life, I know nobody you'll have to speak to. Mr Wilson, the parson, is a very good creature, I believe, but not having been taught the Cumberland dialect in my youth, I was never much edified by his company. Then there's little Evy—by the by, she is big Evy now—Miss Evelyn Sefton, my wife's niece; and if it was not simply impossible to foresee to what a child may grow up, I should say you would find hers the pleasantest face you ever set eyes on. Yes, I have very little doubt that Evy's beautiful, but I'll lay my life that Evy's good. A marvellous child, sir, that was; wise far beyond her years; exquisite and graceful in all her ways; and with a tenderness of heart that would do honour to an angel. Ah! if Providence had given me such a daughter, Mr Blake, she would have made this howling wilderness here a smiling garden; she would have taken Woody himself in hand, and moulded him into some resemblance of the Human; she would have given an object in life to me— Yes, I know I've got one already, but I don't mean that sort of object. I'd have worked my fingers off for such a child as that; and every ten-pound note which I could have saved for her, would have given me greater pleasure than I now feel in spending them—and I am very fond of spending money, Mr Blake.'

'This Miss Evelyn must indeed have been a wonder, as a child,' observed the other drily. 'How is it, being a woman, that she has not met with a husband?'

'Well, thereby hangs a curious story,' returned the painter. 'I see you are getting a little tired of my enthusiasm, but the fact is, not only did this girl endear herself to me (as she did to everybody who knew her, and was able to appreciate her worth), but I had the misfortune to do her an

involuntary wrong, which still more softens me towards her. Ernest Woodford had a nephew—Charles—a fine, bold, open-hearted lad, who naturally felt impatient of the restraints of such a home as that at Sandalwaite; and when his uncle asked my opinion of what should be done with him, my recommendation was to let him see the world. I did not mean exile, with half the globe placed between the poor young fellow and his friends; but his uncle, wishing to get rid of him, since the boy's nature shamed his own by contrast, as I fancy, affected to take me at my word, and so Charles was sent abroad—and died there: he was drowned in Rio harbour.

Claude Murphy's rich voice grew quite hoarse; and it took some time, and a deep draught of whisky and water, to reinstate it in its proper key.

'Well, you may smile,' continued he, 'but, I believe, child as she was, that Evy was in love with him; not the boy with *her*, you know, of course, although he used to call her "his little wife." At all events, when the news came of his death, you might have thought the child had been really left a widow. I have been told it was the saddest thing to see the change wrought in that young creature. There was but little passionate grief, such as one would have expected, but a shadow fell on her young life which has darkened it ever since. Perhaps I am wrong in this opinion; perhaps the young woman would have married long ago, had she had any suitable offer, which, it is likely enough, has been wanting at Sandalwaite; but my belief is what I have stated. When you become her cousin's tutor, you will have an opportunity of judging Evy Sefton for yourself.'

'Yes,' returned Valentine Blake thoughtfully, 'and whatever I find her, I shall, at all events, remember that she once inspired Claude Murphy with genuine affection and respect.'

'A man that knows men and women well, sir,' observed the painter, pulling up his shirt-collar.

'A man that has a sound heart, sir, which is better,' returned his bearded friend, reaching his hand across the table to grasp Claude's.

'Well, upon my life, I don't know, Blake,' answered his host, shaking his head doubtfully, while griping the proffered fingers with great cordiality. 'Most times, I think I am a most awful scamp; but sometimes I do entertain the hope that there may be some good bottom under the mud.'

#### CHAPTER XXIV.—UP THE SCREES.

'The road seems to wind here a good deal, my man,' observed Valentine Blake to the driver of the vehicle that was conveying him from the railway station to out-of-the-way Sandalwaite. 'Is there no short-cut over the hills?'

'Short-cut? Yes, there be straight over Blackbarrow yonder, but thou'lt not find it a nearer road, I warn.'

'Well, I'll try,' returned the other, leaping out of the vehicle just as though it had been standing still, before the man could stop his horses. 'If I get to the top of the hill, I suppose I shall catch sight of the house?'

'Ay, if thou get there, thou wilt. But thou maun luik out for the peat-moss; and there's kind o' screes to climb, where thou'lt rive thy cleighs, I warn. And the top o' the Fell ain't allus where it luiks to be, thou'lt find.'

'A very true observation, my man, which applies

to other things than hills,' replied Blake smiling; 'but I am used to rough travel, and to find my way in a strange country with less of direction than you have given me; so I will take my chance. Your horses will much prefer my room to my company, I am sure; and don't hurry the poor beasts, for if they take my luggage to Dewbank Hall at a foot's pace, it will get there in time enough.'

'A merciful man is merciful to his beast,' says the Scripture; but mercy to hired horses argues a much higher degree of benevolence; at all events, it evidenced as much to the honest Cumberland driver, who jogged on well pleased enough with his lightened load, and muttering to himself: 'A guid lad, a guid lad; but a fule tu that walks when he can ride.'

Unconscious of this depreciating remark, Valentine Blake sprang up the hillside until the carriage had turned a bend of the road and was hidden from view; then he sat down, bareheaded, and surveyed the way by which he had come with pensive eyes. He had seen many grander sights than winding Blennerdale—with its broad bright stream filling up half the narrow valley, and its gray rocks mellowing in the April sunshine—but none more fair. There was not a house within view, nor even a shepherd's hut; nothing witnessed of man's hand save the long white straggling line which was the road, and the circle of great stones by the river's brink, which marked where the sheep-washing took place in its season; yet the peaceful spot looked very livable and homelike, and especially to the eyes of this wanderer in many lands. It seemed to him that he could never tire of watching the cloud-shadows chasing one another along the mountain walls, new tapestried by the careful Spring with green, nor of listening to the pleasant babble of the stream, as it stopped to argue here and there among the crisped eddies, or, after whispering softest nothings to the sedgy marge, ran down the smooth reaches with a silver laugh. There was a strong temptation within him to draw out his tobacco-pouch, and deliver up his

#### Spirit wholly

To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;

but he drew out his watch instead, and found that he must needs push on if he would reach Dewbank Hall at the time at which Mr Woodford had written to say he should expect to see him at dinner. Valentine Blake therefore arose, though not without a sigh, and, with his long firm strides, soon gained the ridge of upland, where the mountain breeze began to fan his forehead, and the weight of thought that sat there to dissolve beneath its influence, like snow in sunlight. There is nothing like the mountain air for drowning care—mountain-dew cannot compare with it for a moment; and then the sights upon that highest of highways are enough to warm the heart of an intending suicide, and make it in love with Life. With every footfall, one comes upon some new beauty, which has been placed there, perhaps (who knows?), especially for ourselves; which, at all events, it is a thousand to one that no other human eye has lit upon: some mossy chamber in a nook, known only to the honey-bee that sings there; some crystal pool, that has reflected nought save the tender blue-bells that droop over it; some tuft of heather, islanded in quaking mould, of a hue and perfume that take captive two senses at once, while a third is



rapt by the hurrying notes of the unseen songster of the clouds. But presently began quite another sort of natural beauties—the Screees, of which our wayfarer had been warned. These were simply a loose mass of shingle, sloping down very abruptly to a mountain-tarn, but the colours of which vied with the rainbow. Valentine could see them shining far before him, more like some allegorical obstacle in the *Pilgrim's Progress* than the reality of rocks and stones which they appeared as he drew nearer, with a slender path at the bottom, which followed every jut and cove of the black lake below.

‘A nice place for a surprise!’ thought the ex-soldier, as he set foot upon this narrow track, and cast his eyes upon the almost precipitous cliff upon his right, the enchanted colouring of which had almost entirely disappeared, leaving a bluish-yellow *débris* of shingle, with here and there a knob of rock projecting like a cannon from a porthole.

‘The folks at the top would only have to loosen a few of yonder boulders, and Giuseppe himself would hesitate to force his way.’

Scarcely had Valentine given utterance to this reflection, when, as though the remark had provoked it, a huge round rock immediately above his proposed line of march began to move in its shallow bed: he could scarcely believe his eyes as he saw it tremble, and sway, and then rotating first slowly, then swifter and swifter, begin to leap with enormous bounds until it almost reached the bottom, when, with one gigantic spring, it rose into the air only to plunge with a sullen plash in the affrighted tarn. The noise, repeated as it was by a prolonged echo, was deafening: and the dust from the *débris*, which it shattered into a thousand pieces wherever it touched, rising smoke-like from the points of contact, produced all the appearance of a cannon-shot: next to it succeeded a rapid settling of the shingle, exactly like the rattle of small-arms.

‘I did not know there were such things as avalanches in this country,’ muttered the astonished Blake, coming to an involuntary pause. But before he could make up his mind either to advance or retreat, another and larger rock, as though emulating the morbid example of its fellow, sought refuge in the still depths of the tarn. The descent took place so much nearer to Valentine than the first, that he watched, not without apprehension, its deer-like bounds, as it set this and that huge stone, almost as large as itself, in motion, and well-nigh brought down the hillside with it. As Valentine looked up in wonder, as soon as the subsidence of the dust would permit him, to the place whence this second portent had proceeded, he thought he caught sight of a human head. It was withdrawn from his view immediately, but the impression was so strong on his mind that he had seen it, that he cried out: ‘Take care; there’s a man below.’ Then, to his exceeding astonishment, a figure appeared on the edge of the cliff gesticulating like some malignant spectre in German legend, and concluding his pantomimic performances with a scream of exultant mirth. Valentine Blake’s lips were what is called Cupidon, and it was a bad sign with him, and a worse for his enemy, when they grew straight and shut close together, as they did now.

‘Look out!’ cried a hoarse voice, apparently half-suffocated with laughter, and then a vast rock, directly overhanging the spot where Valentine stood, began to move; not easily, however, for it

was more deeply embedded than the other, and required a good deal of leverage to set it in motion: it was owing to this fortunate circumstance that he was able to place a considerable distance between himself and its line of descent before it began to move; but even as it was, he incurred great risk, for the formidable missile happened to strike in its headlong course upon one of the projecting points of rock, whereupon it instantly became a shell, pulverising into a hundred fragments, which scattered themselves far and wide. When the individual, a handsome but coarse young man of about twenty years of age, who was thus amusing himself, next peered down, with twinkling mischievous eyes, to see what had become of the unhappy wayfarer, the path was vacant. For one instant, his sunburned cheeks took a leaden hue, smitten with the thought that his practical joke had been carried considerably too far; but the next, he leaped up into the air, and executed a flourish with the cudgel which he had been using as a lever.

‘Why, this fool of a fellow,’ cried he, ‘is absolutely coming up the Screees!’

It certainly looked a foolhardy task enough which Blake had undertaken, but he had chosen the very track which the last boulder had taken, at the top of which there was no other rock to be set a-rolling, so that he had, at all events, only the difficulties of the hill itself to face. These were indeed no slight ones, for as every step was placed on yielding ground, which not only gave way but carried him with it, the shingle loosened from above perpetually poured down upon him. When, in spite of these obstacles, however, it became evident, that if his strength did not fail him, the stranger’s determination would bring him to the top, the individual in possession of the heights began to bestir himself. He loosened the smaller rocks which lay in his neighbourhood, and aimed them with great particularity, although without effect, at the coming foe; and arming himself with formidable stones, he kept up an incessant fire, which the attacking force received or escaped according to circumstances, but in the face of which it never swerved or hesitated.

‘Who the devil can it be?’ murmured the young fellow a little uneasily, notwithstanding his almost Herculean proportions and the possession of his cudgel. ‘I don’t know a man in the country that could come up Blackness Screees.—I say,’ roared he as the other drew ominously near, and he was able to scan that bearded face for the first time, with its eyes gleaming cold and vengeful, and its lips, that had never spoken save once, knit together with a purpose that boded him no good.—‘I say, if you’ll be civil, I will not throw any more stones.’

It was a little late for a garrison to propose conditions with the enemy so close to the gates; and so it occurred perhaps to the young man himself, for, upon receiving no reply to his proposition, he began to move away at a sharp run, although by no means at full speed, and looking behind him with every other step, like one who thinks it prudent to retreat, but at the same time has no apprehension of being overtaken. Nor was the youth’s confidence in his legs misplaced, for he was one of the best runners in Cumberland. He watched the stranger arrive at the summit of the Screees, and sit down to rest; he saw him take out his handkerchief, and stanch in leisurely fashion the blood that flowed from a place in his forehead,

where one of the small sharp stones had struck it: no idea of vengeance for the present seemed to be entertained. But the next time he turned round, which was after a longer interval, he beheld, to his surprise, the bearded man in hot pursuit, and not only running at great speed, but in a manner which, to his practised eye, suggested endurance.

'That long gallop which can tire the hound's deep hate and hunter's fire,' is not the most graceful form of motion in any animal, and can be recognised at some distance; and the young rock-compeller was perfectly well aware that he had his work cut out for him; at the same time, he had the very great advantage of knowing his ground, whereas his pursuer was certainly a stranger to the district (or he would have never tried the Screes), and most probably a foreigner.

'You have good legs,' quoth the young fellow viciously, setting his large white teeth together, like a wild beast at bay, 'but I will see how they like the peat-moss.'

This was a vast stretch of boggy land, not dangerous, indeed, but only traversable at speed along a certain zigzag track, in no way marked except from its being a shade less dark than the rest of the peaty ground. To set foot to the right or left of this, was to sink many inches into the pitch-like ooze, which was to all appearance solid earth, and bore upon its treacherous surface the fairest and most delicate spring-flowers of the Fell. Without slackening for an instant his now headlong speed, the young man traversed this narrow and tortuous track, and not until he found himself upon the firm ground on the other side of the bog, did he turn his head to see what had become of his pursuer. Then, with something akin to terror, he perceived that not only was the latter following every turn and winding of the path with blood-hound-like accuracy, but that, notwithstanding his own exertions, he was actually gaining ground upon him. The whole breadth of Blackbarrow, which was narrow in that part, had now been well-nigh crossed at this racing speed, and he was approaching the edge of it, beneath which lay, although by no means immediately, the vale and lake of Sandalwaite. There were two ways by which to descend, right and left, both meeting five hundred feet or so lower down, in the same blind valley where Claude Murphy had wooed and won the fair Selina, the former of which was the longer but the less precipitous; and this, with the recollection of his pursuer's agility upon the Screes fresh in his mind, the young man, without a moment's hesitation, chose. Tall and muscular, his own weight aided the rapidity of his descent, so that in a space of time that could only be reckoned by seconds, he reached what was comparatively level ground; yet lo! at the junction of the other path, there was the bearded man awaiting him, with sparkling eyes and heaving chest indeed, but far less out of breath, as it seemed to him, than out of temper. Wide-eyed and panting, the young Hercules found himself in an instant disarmed of his cudgel, taken by the throat, and shaken like a fractious child. 'I shall wait till you have got your breath, sir,' said his captor sternly, 'and then I shall give you a thrashing;' and with that he folded his arms, and quietly regarded the youth, very much as his friend Claude might have looked at one of his own works of art, to which he was about to put a few finishing-touches. But while he did so, a curious change came over Valentine

Blake's features; his brows, still knit, grew thoughtful rather than menacing; his eyes, which had contracted and acquired that steel-like hue which they wore only in moments of passion, opened to their fullest stretch, till astonishment at last entirely usurped the place of anger.

'What is your name—you young scoundrel?' asked he; but the latter part of the sentence seemed to arise rather from a sense of duty, than from the embers of irritation. 'Tell me who you are, and you may save your skin.'

'What's that to you?' answered the young fellow gruffly.

'The voice as like as the face,' murmured Valentine to himself; 'and the disposition, as it would seem, inherited too—What! you would, would you?'

'Ay, I would,' replied the other grimly, who had suddenly taken advantage of his own recovered breath, and of his antagonist's pre-occupation, to throw himself upon Valentine from behind, pinioning his arms close to his side. 'I'll give you a Cumberland "felling," and when you're down, I'll squeeze your throat a bit.'

There was every probability of this threat being carried into effect, for, although the better-strung muscles of the elder man might have availed him in a protracted struggle, he knew that advantage to be useless to him in his present plight; and once down, from what he had experienced of the malignity of his foe, he did not doubt but that some serious injury would be inflicted on him. Had it been level ground, the powerful youth would easily have dragged him backwards, but the sloping turf enabled him to offer a stout resistance; this compelled his antagonist to put forth all his strength, and no sooner did he feel him do so, than Valentine instantly changed his tactics, and threw himself backwards with all his force. This stratagem succeeded even beyond his hopes; his enemy's feet slipped from under him, and he came to the ground with a terrible thud, with Valentine upon him. The weight of the former, added to the violence of the shock, beat the breath out of the young rascal's lungs, so that the other scarcely needed the wrench with which he twisted himself out of his arms to regain his freedom. 'Treacherous scoundrel!' cried he leaping to his feet. 'Get up, get up, I say, or it will be the worse for you.'

Slowly and sulkily the young giant gathered himself together, and did as he was bid.

'Look me in the face, and listen,' said Valentine sternly.

It was not a pleasant face for a scoundrel to look at, knowing that it was that of his master, and the voice was one which might have compelled the attention of a ticket-of-leave man; a face full of judgment without mercy, a voice like the tones of Doom. 'Do you see this mark upon my forehead? a wound inflicted on an unoffending stranger, whom it was your duty to assist and guide. To amuse your idle time, you chose to put his life in peril, you yourself being, as you thought, in a place of safety. You are a cruel and cowardly man. I put to you a civil question—which I shall presently put to you again, for I mean to be answered—and your reply was a treacherous and unprovoked assault. Take this, therefore, to teach you better manners.'

In an instant, like a bolt from the cloud, the clenched hand of Valentine Blake struck the young man with frightful force, as he stood sulkily

submissive before him, and knocked him backwards. There he lay, on the green-sward, without sense or motion, till Valentine, stepping down to the beck-side, dipped his handkerchief in the cool stream, and applied it to the temples of the fallen man. 'Will you tell me your name, you scoundrel?' said he gravely, as the other slowly opened his eyes. 'If not, get up, and then I will knock you down again. The pole-axe is the only instrument with brutes like you.'

'What do you want my name for?' growled the other querulously, but obviously cowed.

'Reasons are thrown away upon brutes. I want it; that is enough. Once more, then, what is your name, and where do you live?'

'My name is Bentinck Woodford, and I live at Dewbank Hall,' returned the other reluctantly.

'If you had told me that earlier, you would have spared yourself two black eyes,' observed the victor calmly. 'My name is Valentine Blake, and your father has sent for me to be your tutor.'

### THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY.

On the sixth of September last, an interesting scene took place at the Constabulary Dépôt, Phoenix Park. On that day, the Lord-lieutenant, accompanied by the Marchioness of Abercorn and suite, proceeded thither, in order to distribute medals to the officers, commissioned or non-commissioned, who had command of stations attacked during the Fenian outbreak in March last, and who had so gallantly risked their lives for the public safety. The Marchioness of Abercorn having herself affixed the medals on the breasts of those to whom they had been awarded, the Lord-lieutenant addressed the force stationed at the dépôt, who had been drawn up in a hollow square, in heavy marching order, and informed them that Her Majesty had been graciously pleased to order that the force should be hereafter called the Royal Irish Constabulary, and that they should be entitled to have the Harp and Crown as badges of the force. It may be worth while to describe briefly the organisation of this gallant body, composed of over twelve thousand infantry, and four hundred cavalry, thoroughly drilled and well equipped, averaging five feet eleven inches in height, and armed with the short Enfield rifle and sword-bayonet.

Up to 1825, the Irish police were a local force, appointed for each district by the magistrates, wore no uniform, were for the most part followers and hangers-on of the country gentlemen, and divided their time between keeping the peace, looking after their masters' rabbits, and screening their friends from justice. At this time, no Romanist could be a constable, while now, the proportion of Romanists in the police is two-thirds of the whole body. To the late Sir R. Peel belongs the credit of having created, amid much opposition, the present force, in which it is a stringent rule, that no man is allowed to be stationed in his native county, nor to remain more than a few years in any one station, thus reducing the possibility of favouritism to a minimum. Men, on marrying, are also invariably removed to another district. The force on its first formation consisted of seven thousand men, officered for the most part by half-pay army officers, and dressed in double-breasted coatees and enormous shakoes, after the fashion of the army at that time, and armed with short carabines and bayonets. The present uniform of the Royal Irish Constabulary

resembles that of the Rifle Brigade—dark green with black facings. It is, however, somewhat more showy. The non-commissioned officers wear gold chevrons in lieu of black; and the commissioned officers wear gold ornaments on the shabrack and cross-belt instead of silver. As in the army, the commissioned officers wear uniform when on duty only, and in country stations do not appear in full dress oftener than five or six times in the year. The ordinary uniform is a patrol jacket, similar to that now worn by infantry officers in the line. Shell or mess jackets are not worn by the men, who always appear in the tunic. Since the formation of the force, its duties have yearly become more and more multifarious and various. The 'Peelers,' as Paddy denominates them (often prefaced by the uneuphonious synonym for 'sanguinary'), are not only peace-officers, but well-drilled soldiers under military discipline. They have also to do the duties of the revenue police force, which has been abolished. In addition to this, they collect agricultural statistics, take the census, and furnish most of the Irish returns moved for in parliament; in fact, perform the miscellaneous duties performed by the Civil Service in England. They are not, however, as in England, under the disposal of the magistrates, but are wholly under the control of their own officers, who consist of the following grades: 1. Inspector-general, whose office is in Dublin Castle, and who is usually a military officer of distinction. 2. Deputy-inspector-general. 3. Assistant-inspectors-general, of which there are four, one of whom is always commandant of the dépôt. 4. First-class county inspectors. 5. Second-class ditto. 6. First-class sub-inspectors. 7. Second-class ditto. 8. Third-class ditto. 9. Cadets.

The relative rank of officers of the Royal Constabulary, with regard to presentation at court, &c. was defined by Lord Eglinton, when Lord-lieutenant of Ireland, to be as follows: the three grades of sub-inspectors to rank as ensign, lieutenant, and captain respectively; the two grades of county inspectors as majors and lieutenant-colonels.

The officers are not, as in the English and Dublin city police, promoted from the ranks, but are admitted by a competitive examination, and occupy the position of gentlemen. It is extremely difficult to get a cadetship. These appointments are in the hands of the lord-lieutenant, and are given at the rate of five for each vacancy. On receiving a nomination, the candidate, who must be between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four, and unmarried, presents himself on a given day for examination at Dublin Castle, with four or nine others, according as one or two cadetships may be vacant. Although the subjects in which candidates are examined are not difficult, the competition is very keen, and it but seldom happens that the successful candidates have less than eight hundred marks out of the possible thousand. Instances have, in fact, occurred more than once when *rejected* candidates have gained close on *nine hundred* marks. The unsuccessful competitors are unable to obtain another nomination without immense influence, unless they are the sons of constabulary officers, in which case a second nomination is easily obtained through the inspector-general. The successful candidate is ordered to the dépôt, there to undergo a course of from three to six months' drill, according as he shews himself more or less a proficient. This period being completed, he receives his commission as sub-inspector, signed by the



Lord-lieutenant, and is sent to join the first vacant district. His income is now one hundred and twenty-five pounds per annum, eighteen pounds house allowance, and fifty pounds per annum for two horses, one for his private use, the other for his mounted orderly (each sub-inspector has two orderlies, a mounted and a private ditto; each county inspector two mounted, and one private orderly). In addition, he is allowed a very considerable mileage when absent from home, on duty at races, fairs, &c.; as also for serving on courts of inquiry, by which, as in the army, grave offences against discipline, complaints, &c. are investigated into.

The Royal Irish Constabulary Dépôt, at Dublin, is the drill-centre of the force, and is beautifully situated in the far-famed 'Phaynix.' It is a large barrack, containing accommodation for about two thousand men, and two hundred horses, with a riding-school, and the handsomest and most convenient officers' mess in Ireland. Between the permanent reserve and recruits in training, this dépôt ordinarily contains about one thousand men.

The force in each county is commanded by an inspector, and is divided into districts, varying from six to twelve, according to the size, &c. of the county. Each district is commanded by a sub-inspector, who has from thirty to one hundred men under his command, and is subdivided into sub-districts, more or less numerous, for local reasons, each containing a barrack, garrisoned by from five to fourteen men. The sub-inspector attends all petty sessions in his district, and occupies a seat on the bench.

#### IN A CITY 'BUS.

Few of the habitual dwellers in London have occasion to visit the City less frequently than I have. I have never set foot inside the mansion of the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street in my life. To me, the Stock Exchange is a complete *terra incognita*. Of the thousand-and-one different methods of coining money, as practised by merchants, bankers, brokers, and that countless army which flocks City-ward every week-day morning from nine till eleven, I know absolutely nothing. Neither, to the best of my belief, has the Money Article of the *Times* ever been read by me from beginning to end. Yet, notwithstanding all this, it has so happened that, on certain rare occasions, I have been compelled, by 'urgent private affairs,' to join the throng of City bees for a few hours, and wing my way eastward with the swarm. At such times, I have generally chosen to survey mankind from the box-seat of an omnibus, as from a 'coign of vantage' not to be surpassed, and hardly equalled, for any one who loves to watch the wonderful, ever-shifting panorama of London life.

On one such occasion—now several years ago—the morning was so intolerably rainy, that I was obliged to give up all thought of my favourite perch aloft with the driver, and content myself with the humbler position of an inside. At that time, I was only three-and-twenty years old, and had been in London about a couple of years, having been sent up from my far-off home, in one of the northern counties, to attend the classes of, and to study under, a certain then famous analytical chemist. On the morning to which I have just referred, after waiting twenty minutes in the rain, I was glad to find a vacant place inside one of the numerous City

'buses that passed the end of the street in which my rooms were situated. After having squeezed into my place, and been well scowled at for my pains, I proceeded to take stock of my companions in misery. We were eleven men and one woman. All of us men were more or less moist, and each of us had a very damp umbrella. We had all put on our severe business air, and we were all more or less suspicious of the company in which we found ourselves; and—in consequence, perhaps, of the badness of the weather—we were all more than usually inclined to bully the conductor, and to poke him viciously in the ribs with the ferrules of our umbrellas.

But the twelfth inside? Well, she was a lady, young and nice-looking into the bargain; and enveloped with the prettiest air of unconsciousness that she was in the company of eleven blocks of wood, rather than in that of as many beings of flesh and blood, not quite unsusceptible, let us hope, to the charms of female loveliness. I have no doubt, in my own mind, that if she had travelled any length of time in our company, the mere fact of her presence would have softened our manners, and have weaned us in some measure from that touch-me-not boorishness with which, as a rule, all passengers by omnibuses love to cloak themselves. But fortunately, or unfortunately, as the case may be, journeys by omnibuses are of short duration, and our young lady asked to be set down at the corner of Cheapside. Previously to this, however, we had stopped some half-dozen times to let down and take up other passengers, all of them of the masculine gender, so that I was beginning to look upon myself quite in the light of an old acquaintance, when our young lady got up to leave us. I was sitting next the door as she alighted, and I could not help noticing how pale she seemed all at once to have become. Without heeding the rain that still kept falling, she began to feel for her purse in a trembling, nervous sort of way, first in one pocket, and then in another.

'I have either lost my purse, or else my pocket has been picked,' she said at last, with a sort of gasp.

The conductor expressed no surprise, but merely put a fresh straw in his mouth, and then asked us 'gents' to move while he looked for the purse, 'which, if young ladies was 'bus conductors,' he murmured softly to himself, 'they would learn to take better care of their money.'

But the purse was not to be found. 'If it really ain't anywhere about you, miss,' said the conductor, as he emerged from among the straw, 'then your pocket *has* been picked. How much was there in it?'

'Half-a-sovereign and five-and-sixpence in silver,' answered the young lady, with tears trembling on her eyelids. 'But that was not all. It also contained a valuable diamond ring, the property of the lady with whom I am living, and which I was taking to a jeweller's not far from here to be repaired.'

The conductor turned an eye of compassion on her. 'Well, I'm blowed!' he muttered; 'to think of anybody in their senses being so green.' Then turning quickly on the remaining insides, he scanned us over one by one, ending with a solemn shake of the head. 'Can do nothing for you, miss,' he said. 'You had better go to the police, and give them a description of your property. I knows most of my morning passengers for respectable City

gents; but there was one fishy-looking cove—him as got in at Edgeware Road, and sat next you, miss, all the way to Farringdon Street—what I didn't like the looks of; and if your purse was taken by anybody after you got into the 'bus, I'll lay odds that was the cove as took it. And wasn't he a downy-looking card! O no, not a bit of it!' And the conductor winked at me portentously, to signify that his last remark was meant for 'sarkasum.'

'But I have not even money left to pay my fare with,' urged the young lady.

Half-a-dozen purses were out at once, such was the influence of beauty in distress.

'Never mind the fare, miss,' answered the conductor affably, as he mounted to his perch. 'A tanner won't either break the Co. or make its fortune. You go to the police—that's what you've got to do.—All right, Joey; go ahead.'

The 'bus drove away, leaving the young lady standing on the curb. She put down her fall, to hide her wet eyes, and was turning sadly away, when our conductor leaped nimbly down, ran back to her, said a few words, and was on his perch again in less than two minutes. 'Thought it best to give the pore young creetur my number,' he remarked confidentially to me, 'and the address of our secretary, in case of anythink turning up. But that ain't likely, you know, sir. Ah, it was that fishy-looking cove, you may depend upon it.'

I was detained in the City till five o'clock. At that hour, I set off westward, with the intention of walking home. The rain had ceased hours ago, and a fresh crisp breeze was now blowing; over the murky City roofs the moon was rising in an unclouded sky, and all the shops were ablaze with light. My rooms were in a street leading out of Oxford Street; but having one or two calls to make, I chose, this evening, to go round by way of the Strand and Charing Cross. My calls all made, I turned up St Martin's Lane, as my nearest way home, and was walking carelessly along that classic thoroughfare, when, whom should I see a little way in front of me, staring intently into the window of a jeweller's shop, but the 'fishy-looking cove' of my friend the conductor! I recognised him in a moment, having taken particular notice of him while he was my fellow-passenger in the morning. Not that there was anything either in his appearance or manners that made me suspicious of his honesty, but rather that he offered such a marked contrast to the respectable, well-to-do-looking City men who made up the rest of the passengers. He was a thin, frouzy, disreputable-looking man, dressed in a suit of rusty black; with a hat and boots that had been carefully 'doctored,' and might still do some fair-weather service, but which were ill calculated to stand the brunt of a rainy day. His mouth was that of a habitual dram-drinker. His eyes were weak and watery; and his high-ridged aquiline nose had an inflamed look about it suggestive of many a deep potation. His chin had evidently not felt a razor for several days; and the minute fragments of straw and chaff which clung to his dress, and were mixed up with his unkempt hair, hinted at the style of accommodation to which he had been reduced during the preceding night. Yet, with all this, the fellow carried a jaunty little cane, which he swung to and fro as though he had not a care in the world; and he had on a pair of dog-skin gloves that would have looked stylish if they had not been quite so dirty.

But was it he who took the young lady's purse?

That was the question; and the oftener I looked at the man, the more inclined I felt to endorse the opinion of the 'bus conductor.—A brown morocco purse, containing fifteen-and-sixpence in cash, and a lady's diamond ring of the value of fifty guineas: not a bad morning's work for a gentleman in reduced circumstances. In such a case, however, all the surmising in the world was of no avail. No one had seen him take the purse, and so long as he kept his own counsel, he was safe from detection. The grand point was to ascertain whether he really had the ring or a pawnbroker's duplicate for it about his person. But how to do this?

This was the problem that I kept turning over and over in my mind as I cautiously followed up my man when he went on his way from the jeweller's shop. At the top of the Lane, he seemed to hesitate for half a minute, then he turned to the right, and went up Long Acre, I still following cautiously about a dozen yards in the rear.

'I will put you to a simple test, my friend,' thought I; 'and as you come out of it, so will I adjudge you innocent or guilty.'

Hurrying up behind him, I tapped him lightly on the arm. 'I beg your pardon,' I said, 'but did you drop this pencil-case just now?'

He started as I touched him, and seemed for a few seconds as if he could not take in the meaning of my question. He looked at me with eyes full of suspicion. Whether he recognised me as one of his fellow-passengers by the morning's 'bus, I could not determine. We had halted opposite a large shop, and the light from the window shone full on my silver pencil-case, on which, at length, when he was apparently satisfied with his scrutiny of my face, his glance fastened greedily.

'Picked it up, did you say?' he asked, as he began to fumble with thumb and finger in his waistcoat pocket.

'Just behind you,' I answered. 'But if it's not yours, I shan't bother any more about it, but pocket it myself.'

'But it is mine,' he put in eagerly. 'How stupid of me to lose it!'—I put the pencil-case in his hands without hesitation.—'I am really much obliged to you,' he went on, 'for your kindness in returning it. As you grow older, young gentleman, you will find that honesty is the exception in this world, and not the rule.'

'Well, I'm glad to have found the owner,' I said with a laugh. 'You seem to value the case?'

'I do value it, young gentleman,' answered the old hypocrite. 'Less, perhaps, from its intrinsic worth, than from the fact that it is the sole relic now left me of a very dear friend. Friendship ever let us cherish. A truly noble sentiment!'

'Then, if you value it so highly,' I said, 'you can hardly object to stand half a go of brandy for its recovery.'

'Half a go of brandy!' he said in a horrified tone. 'Young man, young man, I'm very much afraid'—

I had taken out my watch, a valuable gold lever. As his eye fell on it, his intended remonstrance came to an abrupt conclusion.

'Well—ah—yes, you are quite right,' he resumed, 'and I shall be very happy to treat you to a go of brandy. To what place shall we adjourn?'

'To the nearest house, please. I want to get home to my dinner.'

So we went into the nearest tavern, where my

new acquaintance ordered a glass of brandy for me, and half a pint of stout for himself. Not to be behindhand, I ordered a couple of cigars.

'Been in London long?' asked my companion as I was lighting my weed.

'No—only a few months. Fresh from the country.'

'At the risk of being thought impertinent, may I just inquire to what particular line of business your talents are devoted?'

'To no line at all, just at present.—The fact is,' I added, lowering my voice to the proper confidential tone, 'I had a little money left me about a year ago, and I am up in London looking out for a sound business investment. But I've met with nothing to my liking so far: in fact, I'm getting tired of town, and have half a mind to go back home, and take my money with me.'

I could see the old scamp's eyes brighten as he drank in my words eagerly.

'My dear young friend, if you will allow me to call you so,' he began in blandly persuasive accents, 'let me counsel you to do nothing rashly. There are thousands of excellent investments in London. But what *you* want is a man at your back who knows all the ins and outs of this great city; who knows how to separate the wheat from the chaff; and who can distinguish, almost as it were by instinct, a sound investment from a rotten one.'

'All very fine. But where is a greenhorn like me to find such a man?'

The gesture with which my scampish friend bowed to me, and laid his hand on his heart, had in it a touch of the sublime. 'It is not for a modest man like me to vaunt himself or his qualifications, but I—*moi qui vous parle*—have lived in London all my life, and I have not lived with my eyes shut. Although I am, just now—why attempt to deny it?—in some measure under a cloud, my fortunes, I am proud to say, have not always been at their present low ebb. My wife—she is dead now, poor creature!—at one time kept her brougham and pair; and I had my hack for the park, and a hunter down at Melton. But those days are gone, never to return. (Drink up, sir, and let us have another glass.) I was ruined in the year of the great panic. All the more, then, am I fitted, after passing through such a bitter experience, to fill the part of a judicious Mentor to inexperienced youth with capital at its back. Sir, my humble services are yours to command.'

'Well,' I said with a dubious air, 'it is just possible that you might be able to put me up to a useful wrinkle or two. But in any case, this is not the spot to discuss such matters. Come and have a bit of dinner with me at my rooms, and we can talk things over afterwards, with the assistance of a pipe and a tumbler.'

'A bit of dinner, a pipe, and a tumbler! Ha, ha! I will attend you, my young friend, with the utmost satisfaction.'

I hailed the first cab I could find, and we rattled off to my lodgings. No conversation took place while we were going over the stones; but in imagination I saw before me a certain sweet, tearful face, and I felt more determined than ever to go through with the scheme, wild and preposterous as it might have seemed at another time, which had flashed suddenly across my brain while I was following the rascal by my side up St Martin's Lane.

Having instructed my landlady to put down another cutlet, and to send out for one or two extras, we ascended to my rooms.

'In the hope, my dear sir, that our friendship will be a long and flourishing one,' said my unwelcome guest, 'allow me, as a needful preliminary, to present you with my card.'

He handed me, as he spoke, a very limp and rather dirty piece of pasteboard, which he had had some difficulty in finding among his multifarious pockets, and on which was inscribed the name of 'Mr Reginald Tracy.' Of course, I could do no less than return the compliment.

Dinner was served a few minutes later; and while it was in progress, the conversation between Mr Tracy and myself was of the most intermittent character. I gathered enough, however, to enable me to discover that he was a man of some education, and must at one time have mixed in superior society. By the exercise of what knavish arts he had contrived to forfeit the position he once held, I could not, of course, tell: therein, no doubt, lay hidden the great secret of his life. Poor wretch! it was easy to see, from the style in which he got through his food, that a plentiful and wholesome meal was what he had not partaken of for some time. At length, he lay back in his chair in a state of happy repletion. 'Not another morsel, my dear boy!' he said with a benignant smile. 'Positively, I could not. Let good digestion wait on appetite—you know the rest. A bountiful meal! But Providence tempers the wind to the shorn lamb! And now for the pipe and the tumbler. Ha, ha! I have not forgotten.'

As soon as we were fairly under-way with our first tumbler, Mr Tracy broke ground on the subject that was evidently uppermost in his thoughts. 'If, sir,' he said, 'you would favour me with a hint as to the special class of investment in which you are desirous of laying out your capital, and would also furnish me with some idea as to the amount of the capital itself, I should then have some positive data to work upon, and could give you the benefit of my experience in that particular line of procedure which your inclinations may lead you to prefer.'

'Capital, three thousand; line of investment not decided on,' I said. 'Something light and genteel would be preferred.'

'Such as an importer of wines and spirits, for instance?' said Mr Tracy.

'That would do capitally, I daresay, only I happen to know nothing in the world about it.'

'Quite unnecessary, my dear sir, that you should. Only find the money, and I will engage to find the brains, and to make your fortune into the bargain.' Mr Tracy sighed deeply, took a long pull at his tumbler, and then proceeded to enlighten my ignorance as to the various methods by which extraordinary profits might be realised, without the slightest risk of failure, by any one who, combining capital with brains, might choose to appear before the world as an importer of wines and spirits. That some of the methods indicated by Mr Tracy were several degrees on the shady side of honesty, might at once have been predicated from the character of the man; but he certainly had a very neat way of wrapping up and labelling his 'tricks of trade,' so as to make them look as much like a genuine article as possible.

His exhortation and his third tumbler came to an end together.



'Have you ever been in the United States?' I suddenly asked.

'Never, sir. As a patriotic Englishman, my love of travel never took me so far from home.'

'Then you never tasted any of those delicious drinks which, under various strange names, are so popular among the Yankees?'

'Once more a negative must be my answer.—But, my dear young friend, if you will only decide to lay out your capital in accordance with—'

'A moment, if you please,' I said. 'Before going into any further business details, what do you say to a change of tippie? I think we have had enough of this stuff. Let me try whether I cannot brew you one of those delightful American drinks of which I spoke just now. I had the recipes for several of them from an uncle of mine who is captain of a liner.'

'Just as you like, *cher ami*—just as you like,' he said; 'though I don't think much improvement on this delicious toddy is possible.'

'We can come back to it again, if the other does not prove to our liking,' I said.

'And not be flouted for our inconstancy,' added Mr Tracy with a laugh. 'So now for this Yankee nectar of yours. I grow thirsty by anticipation.'

Two large tumblers and the various ingredients required for my purpose were quickly got together; last of all, I went into my study; and after staying there about a couple of minutes, I went back, carrying with me a packet containing half-a-dozen powders done up in differently coloured papers. The degree of knowledge I had laid claim to as a concocter of American drinks was by no means fictitious; and I now proceeded to mix one after the most approved fashion, and ended by opening one of the coloured papers and pouring the contents of it into the tumbler, and then offered the whole to Tracy.

But the putting in of the powder had evidently roused his suspicions, and with a polite wave of the hand, he refused the proffered tumbler. 'After you, my dear sir,' he said. 'I must really insist on your imbibing the first tumbler yourself. The second one will do excellently well for me.'

'As you please,' I said with a shrug. With that I proceeded to drain the first tumbler, expressing by pantomime, as I did so, my appreciation of its excellence. After this, I mixed a second tumblerful, into which, as before, I poured the contents of one of the coloured papers, and then handed the whole to Tracy. His lips having once touched the glass, stuck there till it was empty.

He gave a sigh of intense satisfaction as he put down the glass. 'Ambrosia, by Jupiter!' he exclaimed. 'The man who invented that tippie ought to be immortalised by a statue of the whitest marble. I have no wish to be thought presumptuous, but I cannot resist asking you to mix me one more potation.'

'One! half-a-dozen, if you like,' I replied, 'and all of them different. Unless your taste differs very much from mine, you will find No. 2 an improvement on No. 1.'

He refilled his pipe while I was mixing the second tumbler, but still kept a watchful eye on my proceedings; not that he was any longer suspicious of my good faith, but because he was desirous of taking a lesson in the art of concocting such delicious drinks. When all the other ingredients were properly combined, I opened one of the packets, as before, and shook the contents into

the tumbler; and then having well stirred the whole, I handed the glass to Tracy. But the powder, in this case, possessed properties very different from that of the innocent alkali of which I had made use previously.

As before, Tracy's lips seemed glued to the tumbler till he had drained the contents to the last drop.

'How does that suit your taste?' I said. 'Is it equal to the first?'

'Such a question is hard to answer,' he replied. 'The beauties of both are so evenly balanced, that Bacchus himself would find it difficult to decide between the two. I have to thank you, my dear young friend, for having opened up a new vista of pleasure undreamed of by me before.'

'I must give you one or two of my recipes, and then you can mix for yourself. One more tumbler, and then to business.'

Even while I was speaking, the pipe dropped from his lips, and his eyes began to wander. Slowly and deliberately, I proceeded with my preparations for another tumbler. Tracy, after glancing down reproachfully at his pipe, took no further heed of it, but planting both his elbows firmly on the table, and taking fast hold of his head between his hands, he tried his utmost to bring his weak wavering gaze to bear on my manipulating fingers. But the effort was too much for him. His eyes closed, opened, closed again; and then, with a few incoherent words of apology, his head drooped forward on the table; his nerveless arms lost all powers of tension; and in twenty seconds he was faster asleep than he had ever been in his life before.

It was to this end that all my efforts had been directed. The powder put by me into his second tumbler was a powerful Indian narcotic, which I had latterly had occasion to use in some of my chemical experiments. Although successful so far, it was not without a more unequal beating of the heart than usual that I proceeded to carry out the remainder of my design. However honest one's intentions may be, there is something nefarious in the act of feeling a man's pockets—something that goes utterly against the grain; yet that was precisely what I had now got to do. Before proceeding any further, however, I thought it advisable to have a third person by me to act as a witness of what might follow. So I went down-stairs to my landlady's room, with the intention of getting either the worthy dame herself or her husband to act the part of chorus in my forthcoming little drama. Fortunately, I found the old lady's son, who is a strapping sergeant in the Guards, and who made no difficulty about going back with me.

We found Tracy still soundly asleep, with his head on the table. From this posture I gently raised him, and laid him back in the easy-chair in which he was sitting. My next proceeding was to insinuate my hand into each of his pockets, one after the other, in search of the missing diamond. I found the young lady's purse, but the ring was not in it; I also found a number of pawnbroker's duplicates, but none of them having reference to the object of which I was in search. Here, too, was my pencil-case, which, together with the stolen purse, I did not fail to appropriate. One after the other, I searched all the pockets I could find, but still the ring was not forthcoming, and I began to fear that he had already disposed of it, in which case it was probably lost beyond recovery. My

friend the sergeant, seeing my perplexity, suggested that the ring was perhaps sewn up inside the lining of his coat or waistcoat. Acting on this hint, I felt all over the lining of his coat, but without success; but on coming to his waistcoat, I found something hard, over which a patch of wash-leather had been carefully stitched. A few seconds sufficed to unrip the sewing, and there, wrapped up carefully in cotton-wool and tissue-paper, was a lady's diamond ring. In silent triumph, I held it up on the tip of my finger for the sergeant's inspection.

'Hurrah! that's jolly, and no mistake,' shouted the Guardaman with a wave of his pipe. 'How will Mr Slyboots feel when he wakes up?'

We were not left long in doubt on that point. Mr Tracy began to yawn, and stretch, and pull himself together. It was a peculiarity of the narcotic I had given him that its effect, when administered in small doses, was of very short duration, and I knew that Tracy's stupor would not last above half-an-hour at the most. To assist his recovery, I held a vial of strong smelling-salts under his nose. He opened his eyes, sat up, sneezed, and stared vacantly around.

'Good-evening, governor,' said the sergeant. 'You seem to have had quite a refreshing little snooze.'

Mr Tracy did not respond to this friendly greeting. His fingers were busy fumbling at his waistcoat, and next moment he started up with a tremendous oath, and declared that he had been robbed.

'Of what have you been robbed, Mr Tracy?' I asked.

'Of a valuable diamond ring, which, for better security, I had stitched up in the folds of my waistcoat.'

'Probably this purse also belongs to you?' I said, holding up the article in question.

He changed colour at once, and all the defiance seemed to ooze out of him as I kept my eyes fixed steadily on his.

'That, too, is my property,' he said with a poor attempt at bravado; 'and I must ask you at once to explain how it came into your possession.'

'Let me first tell you how it came into yours,' I said. 'You took it, this morning, out of the pocket of a young lady who sat next you in an omnibus. At that time, it contained, beside a small sum of money, a diamond ring, now in my custody, and which I mean to restore to its owner to-morrow. Are you satisfied?'

'A lie! an infernal lie!' he said with an angry stamp of the foot.

'You are *not* satisfied,' I said. 'Such being the case, let us adjourn to the nearest police station, and each tell his own story to the inspector. For my part, I am quite willing to bear the brunt of such a proceeding. Are you ready to accompany me?'

'Sold! most damnably sold!' cried Tracy, flinging up his clenched hands. Then he turned, and picked up his hat and cane; then facing me, he said: 'You villain! You have tricked me this time, but I'll be revenged on you yet. Next time, it will be my turn, and I advise you to beware.'

'If you are not out of this house in two minutes,' I said, 'I will give you in charge to the police.'

He turned on me with a snarl, and made as though he would have struck me across the face

with his cane. My friend, the sergeant, was on his feet in an instant.

'Now, governor, you just hook it quietly, or it will be worse for you,' he said. 'I may as well light you to the street-door, or you might perhaps find your way by accident into one of the other rooms. Now just step out, will you?'

I called next morning at the office of the Secretary of the Omnibus Company, and found, as I had anticipated, that the young lady had left her address there. To this address, which was in a certain west-end square, I hurried as fast as a cab could take me. I found the young lady, and the old lady with whom she was living as companion, terribly put about by the loss of the ring, and therefore proportionately pleased at its recovery.—That first visit was not the last by any means; but all the rest merely concerns Minnie and myself, and may remain left unwritten.

#### DIRGE OF SUMMER.

ALL in the arms of Autumn lying,  
Fading flowers round her sighing,  
Summer sick and sad is dying.

Now no more shall she be seen,  
In the evening's deep serene,  
Weaving garlands white and green!

Fold her in a winding-sheet,  
Woven all of blossoms meet,  
For the shroud of maiden sweet.

Crimson rose and lily white—  
All she had of best and bright,  
Long have vanished from the light!

Gather Autumn's palest flowers,  
Dank with Autumn's softest showers—  
Bring them to her leafless bowers.

Then through Winter's icy gloom,  
She shall rest as in a tomb—  
Sheeted snow shall shroud her bloom—

Shroud her bloom, but not for ever;  
Mortals die, but seasons never.  
When the chains of Winter sever,

Spring shall wake her up again,  
Lead her forth to hill and plain,  
Over willing hearts to reign.

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